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Letter dated 16 May 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I regret to have to draw the Security Council's attention to the security situation created by the confrontations between the Rwandan Patriotic Army and the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma (RCD-Goma) on Tuesday, 14 May 2002, in Kisangani, capital of Orientale Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

These extremely serious incidents occurred less than two weeks after the visit of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region. The confrontations have resulted in the deaths of more than 20 people, including a child four years of age, who was shot full in the chest.

In view of the accusations put forward on the local radio stations by those in charge of RCD-Goma against civil society leaders, there is reason to fear for the physical safety of prominent members of civil society who have spoken out openly against the continued Rwandan occupation of the city of Kisangani and against collaboration of any kind with the Rwandan enemy.

Several arrests of members of civil society and young people by Rwandan troops have already been reported. Repressive measures have also been taken against the local clergy. For example, Father Xavier Zabalo, a Spaniard, the priest of the parish of Christ-Roi de Kabondo, was arrested Tuesday by Rwandan troops as he was taking a wounded man to the hospital in his vehicle. After arrest he was taken to an unknown location.

Moreover, to date the RCD-Goma authorities have inexplicably persisted in refusing any aid to Congolese wounded in these confrontations.

It would appear that the confrontations are a manoeuvre on the part of Rwanda to create a pretext for not withdrawing its troops from the city of Kisangani in conformity with all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the practical measures and decisions taken by the Political Committee on implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, which called upon the aggressor nation to leave Kisangani by 6 April 2002.

The intent of the manoeuvre is also to sabotage the international peace symposium initiated by the religious communities and civil society of Kisangani in collaboration with the associations "Beatti costruttori di pace" of Italy and

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"Développement et paix" of Canada, scheduled to take place in Kisangani from 24 to 26 May 2002.

It is essential that the Security Council should take all necessary measures to save the civilian population of Kisangani from the barbarity, atrocities and cruelty of the Rwandan soldiers. The Council should instruct the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to deploy observers to dissuade the Rwandan aggressors from committing acts of violence against the innocent civilians of Kisangani. The inhabitants of that city, it should be recalled, have already suffered three waves of confrontations between foreign forces, including the Rwandan Patriotic Army and the Ugandan armed forces.

My Government takes this opportunity to ask the Security Council to demand from Rwanda:

1. Its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the city of Kisangani;

2. Its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in accordance with all the relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

If Rwanda should refuse to comply with the demands of the Security Council concerning its unconditional withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government believes that the Council would restore its credibility in the region and serve the ends of justice by accompanying its demand for unconditional withdrawal from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the appropriate enforcement action as provided for by Articles 39, 41 and 42 of the Charter of the United Nations, notably:

(a) An international embargo on the direct or indirect delivery, sale or transfer of weapons to the Government of Rwanda;

(b) An economic, commercial and financial blockade against the Government of Rwanda;

(c) The suspension of diplomatic relations between the Government of the States Members of the United Nations and the Government of Rwanda;

(d) A ban on travel abroad by Rwandan leaders and their families.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ileka **Atoki**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative